STATUS OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A load ring for raising and/or lowering an oilfield tubular having a box end, a threaded pin end and a non-threaded exterior surface between said box end and said threaded pin end, comprising:

a cylindrical ring sized to slide over the non-threaded exterior surface of said tubular, said cylindrical ring having a first end, a second end, and a shoulder ring having top and lower surfaces at [[its]] the first end of said cylindrical ring and a sidewall between [[said]] the second end of said cylindrical ring and said [[shoulder]] first end of said cylindrical ring, said sidewall having a circumferential groove about its interior surface, and a second groove through said sidewall for accessing said circumferential groove, the outside diameter of said sidewall being less than the outside diameter of said shoulder ring;

a split-ring metal band having, at least in part, a metal saw tooth inner diameter for gripping the non-threaded exterior surface of said oilfield tubular between said box end and said threaded pin end, and having first and second ends positioned within said circumferential groove having a latch mechanism connected between said first and second ends of said band, said latch mechanism having a handle accessible through said second groove which, when activated, reduces the internal diameter of said band, and when deactivated, increases the internal diameter of said band, whereby the activation of said handle causes said band to grip the non-threaded exterior surface of said tubular, and the deactivation of said handle causes said band to release the non-threaded exterior surface of said tubular.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The load ring according to Claim 1, wherein the circumferential groove has an inclined surface, and said metal band has an inclined surface which can ride along the inclined surface of said circumferential groove, whereby the band grips the non-threaded external surface even tighter if the oilfield tubular attempts to escape the grip of the band.

4. (Currently Amended)The load ring according to Claim1, wherein said first cylindrical ring is manufactured from metal, and including in addition thereto, a second cylindrical ring having upper and lower ends, and said second cylindrical ring is manufactured from hard plastic which is bonded to the exterior of the sidewall of the first cylinder wall and its lower end bonded to the top surface of said shoulder ring.

5. (Previously Presented) The load ring according to Claim 4, wherein said second cylindrical ring is a split-ring.

6. (Original) The load ring according to Claim 5, wherein said second cylindrical ring has a sidewall having a cut-out portal aligned with said second groove to allow access to the handle of said latch mechanism contained in said circumferential groove.

7. (Original) The load ring according to the Claim 6, wherein the upper end of said second cylindrical ring has a beveled edge allowing easier passage of said load ring through the elevator slips.

8. (Currently Amended) A load ring for raising and/or lowering an oilfield tubular having a box end, a threaded pin end and a non-threaded exterior surface between said box end and said threaded pin end, comprising:

a cylindrical ring sized to slide over the non-threaded exterior surface of said tubular, said cylindrical ring having a first end, a second end, and a shoulder ring having top and lower surfaces at [[its]] the first end of said cylindrical ring and a sidewall between [[said]] the second end of said cylindrical ring and said [[shoulder]] first end of said cylindrical ring, said sidewall having a circumferential groove about its interior surface, and a second groove through said sidewall for accessing said circumferential groove, the outside diameter of said sidewall being less than the outside diameter of said shoulder ring;

a split-ring metal band having, at least in part, a metal saw tooth inner diameter for gripping the non-threaded exterior surface of said oilfield tubular between said box end and said threaded pin end, and having first and second ends positioned within said circumferential groove having a latch connected between said first and second ends of said band, said latch, when activated,

reducing the internal diameter of said band, and when deactivated, increasing the internal diameter of said band, whereby the activation of said latch causes said band to grip the non-threaded exterior surface of said tubular, and the deactivation of said latch causes said band to release the non-threaded exterior surface of said tubular.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously Presented) The load ring according to Claim 8, wherein the circumferential groove has an inclined surface, and said metal band has an inclined surface which can ride along the inclined surface of said circumferential groove, whereby the band grips the non-threaded external surface of said tubular even tighter if the oilfield tubular attempts to escape the grip of the band.

11. (Previously Presented) The load ring according to Claim 8, wherein said first cylindrical ring is manufactured from metal, and including in addition thereto, a second cylindrical ring having upper and lower ends, and said second cylindrical ring is manufactured from hard plastic which is bonded to the exterior of the sidewall of the first cylinder wall and its lower end bonded to the top surface of said shoulder ring.

12. (Original) The load ring according to Claim 11, wherein said second cylindrical ring is a split-ring.

13. (Previously Presented) The load ring according to Claim 12, wherein said second cylindrical ring has a sidewall having a cut-out portal aligned with said second groove to allow access to the said latch contained in said circumferential groove.

14. (Original) The load ring according to the Claim 13, wherein the upper end of said second cylindrical ring has a beveled edge allowing easier passage of said load ring through the elevator slips.